

London Concord Singers

Conductor Malcolm Cottle

Thursday, December 17th, 2009
7.30 pm

PROGRAMME

Andreas Hammerschmidt – Machet die Tore weit
Michael Praetorius – Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme
Felix Mendelssohn – Im Advent
Hieronymus Praetorius – Ecce Dominus veniet
Luc Jakobs – Nova! Nova!
Samuel Scheidt – Nu komm der Heyden Heyland
Jonathan Dove – I am the day

∞ interval ∞

Orlando Gibbons – Lift up your heads
Johann Walther – Nun komm die Heiden Heiland
Felix Mendelssohn – Weihnachten
Keith Roberts – Veni

Programme Price £1.50

ANDREAS HAMMERSCHMIDT (1612– 1675) ~ Machet die Tore weit

Hammerschmidt was born in a small Protestant community in Bohemia. During the 30 years war the Hammerschmidt family had to flee Bohemia when the country became Catholic and they settled in Freiberg in Saxony where Hammerschmidt received a superb musical education from unknown sources. The early part of his career was spent wandering between posts but in 1639 he moved to Zitau where he stayed as organist until the end of his life. Though badly damaged in the 30 years war, musical life in Zitau eventually regained its former high standard after the end of the war in 1648. Hammerschmidt wrote mainly sacred music, consisting of motets, sacred concertos and arias. Most documents relating to his time in Zitau, however, were burned in 1757 during the Seven Years War.

*Machet die Tore weit
und die Türen in der Welt
hoch, daß der König der Ehren
einziehe. Wer ist der selbige
König? Es ist der Herr,
stark und mächtig im Streit.
Machet die Tore weit
und die Türen in der Welt
hoch! Hosanna in der Höhe.*

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting
doors, and the King of glory
shall come in. Who is the King
of glory? It is the Lord strong
and mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
and be ye lift up, ye everlasting
doors! Hosanna in the highest.

MICHAEL PRAETORIUS (1571 - 1621) ~ Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme

Praetorius was essentially a self-taught composer; he seems to have had no formal musical education after leaving school, though whilst at Frankfurt University he was certainly acquainted with the composer Bartholomäus Gesius. In 1587 he was appointed organist at St. Marien's Church in Frankfurt. Sometime in the 1590's he entered the service, as an organist, of the Duke of Brunswick, going on to become court Kapellmeister. When the Duke died in 1613, Praetorius went to spend over two years in Dresden at the court of the Elector of Saxony. Here he met Schutz and Scheidt as well as getting to know the latest Italian music. When he finally returned to the Duke of Brunswick's service ill health prevented him from fulfilling his duties properly. Praetorius was a remarkably prolific composer and produced over 1000 sacred works; most of these are

based on Lutheran hymns or use the Latin Kyrie and Gloria which were permitted for use in the Lutheran church. **Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme** is written for two unequal choirs, one of three voices (SAT) the other of four voices (SATB)

*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme
der Wächter sehr hoch auf der
Zinne, wach auf, du Stadt
Jerusalem!
Mitternacht heißt diese Stunde,
sie rufen uns mit hellem Munde,
wo seid ihr klugen Jungfrauen?
Wacht auf, der Bräut'gam
kömmt; steht auf, die Lampen
nehmt. Nun komm, du werthe
Kron, o Jesu, Gottes Sohn.
Halleluja!
Macht euch bereit zu der
Hochzeit,
Ihr müßet ihm entgegengehn!*

"Sleepers, wake!" the watch cry
pealeth, while slumber deep
each eyelid sealeth:
Awake, Jerusalem, awake!
Midnight's solemn hour is tolling,
and seraph-notes are onward
rolling; They call on us our part
to take. Come forth, ye virgins
wise: The Bridegroom comes,
arise!
Alleluia!
Each lamp be bright with ready
light to grace the marriage feast
tonight.

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809 – 1847) ~ Im Advent;
Weihnachten (from Sechs Sprüche, Opus 79)**

Mendelssohn grew up in a wealthy, artistic, banking family in Berlin, with two sisters and a brother, and was surrounded by opportunity and privilege in his childhood. In 1816 his parents had decided to convert to Christianity because of social reasons in their German environment, and they went on to change their last name to Bartholdy.

As a conductor and music organiser his most significant achievement was in Leipzig (1835-47), where to great acclaim he conducted the Gewandhaus Orchestra, championing both historical and modern works by Bach, Beethoven, Weber, Schumann and Berlioz. He founded and directed the Leipzig Conservatory (1843). Despite his busy lifestyle, he found time for composing in his summer holidays.

He was intermittently (and less happily) employed by the King of Prussia as a composer and choirmaster in Berlin, where he wrote

highly successful incidental music, notably for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1843). His **Six Pieces** or **Six Anthems** are part of a group of pieces that Mendelssohn composed whilst in Berlin, for Berlin Cathedral where convention imposed restrictions on the type of texts that could be set and the forces used. The two pieces we perform tonight are settings of Biblical texts for eight-part choir, each for a different part of the church's year.

Im Advent

Lasset uns frohlocken, es nahet der Heiland, den Gott uns verheißen. Der Name des Herrn sei gelobet in Ewigkeit. Halleluja! Let all be joyful! The redeemer is coming, whom the Lord has promised. The name of the Lord be praised for ever. Halleluja!

HIERONYMOUS PRAETORIUS (1560– 1629) ~ Ecce Dominus veniet

Praetorius received his first instruction from his father Jacob, later becoming his assistant organist at the Jakobkirche in Hamburg. On his father's death he took over as first organist and held the post until his death. Nearly all his masses, motets and magnificats were published in Hamburg in a magnificent five-volume collected edition, issued between 1616 and 1625. Hieronymus Praetorius was no relation to Michael Praetorius.

Ecce Dominus Veniet is one of Praetorius's 102 Latin motets. A poly-choral work, it is written for two choirs. Praetorius's Venetian inspired polychoral motets were amongst the first such music to be published in North Germany. The text is an antiphon from the Little Vespers of BMV.

Prima pars

*Ecce, Dominus veniet
et omnes sancti ejus cum eo,
Et erit in die illa lux magna.
Et exhibit de Jerusalem
Sicut aqua munda.*

Behold, the Lord comes
and all his saints with him
and on that day there will be
great light, and living waters
shall go out from Jerusalem.

Secunda pars

*Et regnabit Dominus in aeternum
super omnes gentes. Alleluia.* And the Lord shall be King for
ever over all the earth. Alleluia.

LUC JAKOBS (born 1956) ~ Nova! Nova!

Dutch composer Luc Jakobs is a choral director and a harmony teacher at the Academy of Music in Maastricht. He directs the Kammerkoor Couleur Vocale and the Kerkelijk zangkoor St. Caecilia. He also plays in the jazz-funk band MatchBox.

*Nova! Nova! Ave fit ex Eva
Gabriel of high degree
He came down from Trinity
From Nazareth to Galilee
I met a maiden in a place;
I kneeled down afore her face
And said Hail Mary full of Grace*

*Nova! Nova! Ave fit ex Eva
It is not yet six months a-gone
Since Elizabeth conceived John
As it was prophesied befor
Nova
Then said the maiden: Verily
I am your servant truly,
Ecce ancilla Domini*

*Nova! Nova! Ave fit ex Eva
When the maid heard tell of this
She was full sore a bashed y-wis
And weened that she had done
amiss.*

*Nova! Nova! Ave fit ex Eva.
Nova!
(English 15th century)*

*Then said the angel: Dread not
thou, be conceived with great
virtue whose name shall be
called Jesu.*

SAMUEL SCHEIDT (1587 – 1654) ~ Nu komm der Heyden Heyland

Scheidt's father Konrad was the municipal beer and wine steward for the German city of Halle. There was no tradition of music in his family, though the family counted composers and an organ builder amongst their friends. Samuel, as well as his two younger brothers, went on to become musicians. Samuel learned music at the local Gymnasium and whilst still in his teens he was organist at the Moritzkirche. In 1608 he travelled to Amsterdam to study with Sweelinck. He returned to Halle, becoming court organist to the Margrave of Brandenburg, eventually becoming Kapellmeister. During this time he worked with both Michael Praetorius and Schutz. This happy period came to an end in 1625 when his employer joined the 30 years war. Scheidt remained in post, but received no salary and most of his musicians left. Eventually he did obtain a position

at one of the city churches. When peace returned, in 1638, Scheidt returned to his court position and remained in post until his death.

Scheidt published seven collections of sacred vocal music between 1620 and 1640, mixing settings of Latin texts with more traditional German elements. Mostly his German texts are taken from Luther, notably his translation of the Bible. **Nu komm der Heyden Heyland**, which is written for double choir, comes from Scheidt's 1620 publication, *Cantiones Sacrae*, which was a collection of polychoral motets setting both German and Latin texts. The text is a regional variation of the more commonly written text in the facing page in the Walther.

JONATHAN DOVE (born 1959) ~ I am the day

Dove arranged a number of operas for English Touring Opera and City of Birmingham Opera, including a version of the Ring reduced to two evenings and just 18 instrumental players. From 2001 to 2006 he was Artistic Director of the Spitalfields Festival. **I am the day** was commissioned by the Spitalfields Festival (with funds provided by Nicola and David Souden to mark Jane de Quincey's millennium birthday) and first performed in Christ Church, Spitalfields by the choir of Trinity College, Cambridge in 1999. It is a setting of the legend of St. Christopher from the Book of Revelation and contrasts the hushed reverence of the opening phrase with a livelier, sparkling texture for the words *I am Alpha and Omega*. Later on the traditional hymn tune for *O come, o come Emmanuel* is also woven into the writing.

I am the day soon to be born. I am the sprig from the root of David and the bright star of the morning. I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel. O come, o come Emmanuel.

⌘ interval ⌘

ORLANDO GIBBONS (1583 – 1625) ~ Lift up your heads

Gibbons was born in Oxford, the fourth son in a family of musicians. He was a chorister at King's College, Cambridge, where one of his brothers was Master of the Choristers. Gibbons later became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, serving both the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey as organist. He died at the age of 42 at Canterbury Cathedral whilst awaiting the arrival of the new Queen, Henrietta Maria. Gibbons was one of the first major English choral composers whose schooling had all taken place since England had become Protestant. His English anthems are highly polished and amongst the finest in the repertory. **Lift up your heads** is a setting for 6-voiced unaccompanied choir of text from Psalm 24.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is the King of glory? It is the Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory.

JOHANN WALTHER (1496 - 1570) ~ Nun komm der Heiden Heiland

Walther was probably a choir boy in his youth and in 1521 became a bass in the Elector of Saxony's Hofkapelle. After the death of Elector Friedrich, Walther's studied at the University of Leipzig. But by the 1530's he had moved from the Hofkapelle and was teaching music and organising the singing in the parish church at Torgau. When the title of Elector moved to Dresden (following the Schmalkaldic War), Walther became director of the Dresden Hofkapelle and remained there from 1548 to 1554 when he retired.

Walther was a strict Lutheran and was acquainted with Luther. He advised Luther on the draft of the German Mass in 1525, and Luther wrote the preface to Walther's hymnbook, the first Lutheran collection of choral music. Walther's setting of **Nun komm der Heiden Heiland** was published in 1551.

*Nun komm der Heiden Heiland,
der Jungfrauen Kind erkannt,
daß sich wundert alle Welt,
Gott solch Geburt ihm bestellt*

Now come, Saviour of the
heathen, recognized as the
Virgin's Child, so that the world
 marvels that God ordained such
a birth for Him

FELIX MENDELSSOHN ~ Weihnachten (from Sechs Spruche, Opus 79)

Weihnachten

Frohlocket, ihr Völker auf Erden und preiset Gott! Der Heiland ist erschienen, den der Herr verheißen. Er hat seine Gerechtigkeit der Welt offenbaret, Halleluja!

Rejoice, ye people of the earth, and praise God! The redeemer is come, whom the Lord has promised. He has revealed his justice to the world. Hallelujah!

KEITH ROBERTS ~ Veni

Veni was composed in 2000 for Mark Forkgen and Canticum. It is a setting of the *Great O Antiphons*, the short plainsong pieces which, in a liturgical context, frame the Magnificat at Vespers in the seven days leading up to Christmas. They are so called because, as well as starting with the word *O*, the plainsong tune that is used for this word is identical for each antiphon, making them instantly recognisable to a congregation and putting a musical marker down in anticipation of the forthcoming festival. Halfway through each antiphon the word *Veni* (come in English) occurs. This is the same musical motif for each day's plainsong, and is an extension of the idea which binds the more modern work. Thus, in this setting, the occurrence of the two-note motif on the word *Veni*, and what happens to the music (or deliberately doesn't happen) is what gives each movement its meaning.

In the first movement *O Sapientia*, the basses sing *O* as a pedal B flat, on top of which a series of different tonalities try to establish themselves, without resolution. After a short silence, the sopranos sing *Veni* as a high pedal, also on B flat, around which the other parts sing a fugato in B major. The recurrence of the opening motif then brings this counterpoint to an end. The second movement follows almost *attacca* and is totally non-contrapuntal – a conscious echo of and homage to Arvo Pärt, whose setting of the *O Antiphons* (in German) was an inspiration for this piece. The descending bass line is the key here – it appears to be converging on B flat major (albeit in the Lydian mode) but on the word *Veni* it starts to descend from somewhere else, continuing the musical ambiguity.

O Radix Jesse creates a mysterious, disturbing atmosphere by its rotational use of the 12-note chromatic scale in 4 groups of 6 notes (of each group of 6, 3 is used by the next group as well). The B flat on *Veni* turns the circle. Also of significance is the use of the minor chord on the word *reges* – this is a forerunner of the next two movements. The fourth movement consists almost entirely of this one minor chord, in different keys, superimposed – only occasionally is a ray of major sunlight allowed to come through before the door slams shut on the prison. The fifth movement starts in a world of warm sunshine, finally settling on a chord of E major, whereupon the B flat of the word *Veni*, (the first note in the movement outside the scale of E major), creates the uncertainty which allows the shadow of death to take over again through the recurrence of the minor chord of the preceding movement.

O Rex Gentium stands by itself. It also has a pedal note, this time (mostly) in the altos on a D, but this time shifting around uneasily. Little flashes of light punctuate the atmosphere, occasionally G major emerges from the fog, and the sopranos in canon blaze the words following *Veni* in fanfare, but the gloom settles at the end with all parts stuck in the mire, buzzing around the pedal D. The first half of the final movement is designed to be similarly aimless, with the music charging back and forth on repetitions of the word *Emmanuel* on F sharp. The appearance of the word *Veni* on B flat (or A sharp, the third of F sharp major) finally prompts the music to take off, with F sharp descending to F and disappearing. *Veni* is repeated over and over again by the upper voices, motifs from all the preceding movements appear, until finally the B flat Lydian mode of the second movement establishes itself (this time with the descending bass resolving to the B flat). All the struggles and searchings of the previous movements are resolved and all parts cry welcome to the Saviour.
(Keith Roberts)

1. O Sapientia

*O Sapientia, quae ex ore
Altissimi prodisti, attingens a fine
euque ad finem, fortiter suaviter,
disponens omnia:
veni ad docendum nos viam
prudentiae.*

O Wisdom, coming forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from one end to the other mightily, and sweetly ordering all things:
Come and teach us the way of prudence.

2. O Adonai

O Adonai, et Dux domus Israel, qui Moysi in igne flammae rubi apparuisti, et ei in Sina legem dedisti: veni ad redimendum nos in brachio extento.

3. O Radix Jesse

O Radix Jesse, qui stas in signum populorum, super quem continebunt reges os suum, quem Gentes deprecabuntur: veni ad liberandum nos, iam noli tardare.

4. O Clavis David

O Clavis David, et sceptrum domus Israel; qui aperis, et nemo claudit; claudis, et nemo aperit: veni, et educ vincitum de domo carceris, sedentem in tenebris, et umbra mortis.

5. O Oriens

O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae, et sol justitiae: veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris, et umbra mortis.

6. O Rex Gentium

O Rex Gentium, et desideratus earum, lapisque angularis, qui facis utraque unum: veni, et salva hominem, quem de limo formasti.

7. O Emmanuel

O Emmanuel, Rex et legifer noster, expectatio Gentium, et Salvator earum: veni ad salvandum nos, Domine, Deus noster.

O Adonai, and leader of the House of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the fire of the burning bush and gave him the law on Sinai: Come and redeem us with an outstretched arm.

O Root of Jesse, standing as a sign among the peoples; before you kings will shut their mouths, to you the nations will make their prayer: Come and deliver us, and delay no longer.

O Key of David and sceptre of the House of Israel; you open and no one can shut; you shut and no one can open: Come and lead the prisoners from the prison house, those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

O Morning Star, splendour of light eternal and sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

O King of the nations, and their desire, the cornerstone making both one: Come and save the human race, which you fashioned from clay.

O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver, the hope of the nations and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

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London Concord Singers
36 Torrens Road, London, SW2 5BT

Our future concerts are 25th March & 15th July.
Join our mailing list or see our website for more details:
www.londonconcordingsingers.org.uk

Singers Wanted

We are always keen for new singers to join the choir. If you are interested, then please speak to one of the singers tonight or contact the Hon. Secretary, Robert Hugill.

Tel: 020 7374 3600

Email: info@londonconcordingsingers.org.uk

Malcolm Cottle

Malcolm Cottle was a chorister of St. Paul's Cathedral and sang at the Coronation in 1953. He is currently Musical Director of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Cadogan Street, Chelsea. For over 35 years he was Musical Director of the North London Progressive Synagogue and is currently Musical Director of Southgate Progressive Synagogue. Malcolm has been Chorus Master of Hatfield Philharmonic Chorus and has worked with New Opera Company, Beaufort Opera, and Orpheus Opera. He has been conductor of the London Concord Singers since 1966.

Malcolm has worked in theatre as Musical Director at Sheffield Playhouse, Nottingham Playhouse, Wyvern Theatre, Swindon and Swan Theatre, Worcester. He currently works at the London Studio Centre for Dance and Drama, for whom he has directed the music for several shows, ranging from *Show Boat* to *West Side Story* and *Hair!* He is also Assistant Musical Director to the Alyth Choral Society.

London Concord Singers

Soprano: Merrie Cave, Alison Cross, Bozenna Borzyskowska, Pam Feild, Hilary Glover, Victoria Hall, Pia Huber, Maggie Jennings, Sylvia Kalisch, Diana Maynard, Rowena Wells

Alto: Tricia Cottle, Gretchen Cummings, Caroline Hill, Valerie MacLeod, Sally Prime, Ruth Sanderson, Jill Tipping, Dorothy Wilkinson

Tenor: Katie Boot, Steve Finch, Andrew Horsfield, Robert Hugill, Margaret Jackson-Roberts, Phillip Schöne

Bass: Michael Derrick, John McLeod, John Penty, Christopher Slack, Colin Symes

London Concord Singers was established in 1966 by the conductor, Malcolm Cottle and he has remained the Musical Director ever since. The choir became a registered charity in 1996. The choir rehearses weekly in Central London and gives three main concerts per year with a repertoire ranging widely from Renaissance to Contemporary. Concert programmes tend to concentrate on unaccompanied music and are known for their eclecticism.

London Concord Singers have given a number of world, UK and London premieres of works by composers such as John Rutter, Andrzej Panufnik, Richard Rodney Bennett, John McCabe, Kenneth Leighton and Michael Ball, as well as pieces specially written for the choir. The choir has also given performances of major contemporary pieces such as Alfred Schnittke's Choral Concerto and Malcolm Williamson's Requiem for a Tribe Brother.

In recent years the choir have undertaken a short foreign concert tour each summer; places visited include Rouen, Caen, Ghent, Bruges, Strasbourg, Barcelona, and Tallinn. On their 2003 French tour, the choir sang to an audience of 1300 in Rheims Cathedral in a concert which was part of the *Flâneries Musicales d'Été*. In 2007 they performed in Basel, giving concerts in the Basler Münster and singing mass at Mariastein monastery. In 2008 they performed in Verona and Bardolino, and this year they travelled to Antwerp where they sang two concerts and Mass in the Cathedral.

Programme notes by Robert Hugill.